thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

Pholo: Kilian Kröll

Editor's Note: Happy 1st Birthday TD! What's Next?

by Lisa Kraus

In the spring of 2010 Anna Drozdowski and I made each other a promise. She had been to the NEA Arts Journalism Institute at ADF the year before and I was about to go. Sitting outside at Honey's, we knew we wanted to do something to enrich dance writing in Philadelphia. Jump cut to October 2012: now thINKingDANCE is celebrating its first birthday!

We've accomplished our goals of covering much of Philly's under-the-radar dance and of publishing over two hundred pieces on diverse styles in diverse locales. We brought a dedicated cadre of writers through a series of workshops given by esteemed dance writers, some classic and a few pushing the boundaries. We've stumbled a bit, righted ourselves, and dealt with challenges both ethical and editorial. Based on feedback from the writers, many consider their most important take-away to be the dialogue between each writer and her editors, which took place with each piece on the site.

What does it mean to you to have thINKingDANCE in Philadelphia? We hope you will share your thoughts with us in the (anonymous) reader's survey or in an email.

And what's next? We have abundant energy but limited resources with our Dance Advance grant completed and other grants pending. So we are going to streamline, going for a more sustainable sharing of administration and an output of eight articles a month. Just for comparison, that's about half of what we've been averaging. We'll likely have a few pieces by guests. Nine new writers will be joining TD, we will run another series of workshops and open conversations, and we plan to inaugurate the Philly Performance Club (stay tuned).

When Amy Fitterer, head of Dance/USA stopped in to our October meeting, she flashed on the same idea I've been having—that versions of thINKingDANCE should sprout up all over the country. But how to support it and make it sustainable? When publications everywhere are fighting for their survival, or figuring out how to monetize, that's our big question as we go dancing into year two.

By Lisa Kraus

October 11, 2012